



Linkages to Learning, a Collaborative School-based Partnership among the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, Public and Private Agencies, Families and Communities

Linkages Jewels Sparkle at Mothers Tea

May 10th was a beautiful spring day and Rockville's Glenview Mansion was the perfect backdrop for our Second Annual Mothers Empowerment Tea. Guests nibbled on delicacies prepared by Linkages graduates of *Through the Kitchen Door*, looked for "great deals" at the silent auction and networked with like-minded supporters and leaders from the County and State. But this year, Linkages Mothers Tea also launched "Linkages Jewels," beautiful glass pins, key chains, earrings and pendants handcrafted by our parents through a creative partnership with Gary Rosenthal, an internationally renowned Montgomery County artist.

From cutting the glass to the creative process of glass design, from the actual gluing of the fused glass onto the metal fastenings to putting the finished product into the packaging, our parents learned new skills. In addition to being paid for producing the Jewels and helping to support Linkages' empowerment programs, the women became more self-confident and gained a new sense of accomplishment.



County Executive Doug Duncan with Arva Jackson, Congressman Chris Van Hollen and Dr. Paul Scott, MCPS Linkages Coordinator

"In order to Leave No Child Behind, we must first make sure they have the building blocks for learning – good health, sound minds and emotional security," stated Van Hollen.

Arva Jackson, Montgomery County Collaboration Council Co-Chair, was honored for her advocacy and leadership on behalf of children and received a beautiful glass sculpture in recognition of her efforts. In her remarks Jackson said, "Ten years ago, there was an idea of people working together in various institutions to develop something powerful, universal and potentially immortal. They called it Linkages to Learning and it has stood the test of time." Ms. Jackson shared with the group her mantra to continually strive to improve the lives of children and families, noting that she realizes that "because I'm only one, I cannot do everything. But because I am only one, let me not neglect to do those things that I can do."

Linkages continues to seek opportunities to partner with groups and businesses interested in supporting its Jewels project with Gary Rosenthal's Arts Enrichment Fund. All funds raised support Linkages ongoing programs for parents – job readiness workshops, mothers support groups, cooking and nutrition classes and annual "renewal" retreats.



Mothers craft Linkages Jewels in Gary Rosenthal's Kensington Studio

The Mothers Tea featured County Executive Douglas M. Duncan, who welcomed the crowd of 200 and noted that the growth of Linkages from two to twenty-two schools reflects both the changing demographics and needs of county residents and Linkages' success at involving parents. "Now those same parents who had rarely entered the school building are attending parent-teacher conferences and PTA meetings. And they're volunteering in the cafeteria, playground and Linkages offices," said Duncan.

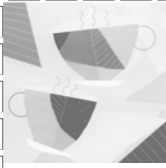
County Council Vice-President Thomas Perez credited Linkages embrace of our multicultural community as a key to its success, and challenged community advocates to assure that all of our leaders understand the value of comprehensive and culturally accessible family services. Congressman Chris Van Hollen noted that Linkages' professionals help children and families address problems and identify resources.



Linkages mother proudly shows "Jewels"

Inside this Issue:

Tea Sponsors & Donors	2
Donors & Partners	3-4
Family Literacy in the 21st Century	5
Gaithersburg Teens Get Cooking	5
Health Fairs	6
Staff News	6
Tobacco Free Tweens	7
Take Your Child to Work Day	7
Mothers Empowerment Scenes	8



LINKAGES THANKS ITS WONDERFUL DONORS, IN-KIND-SUPPORTERS AND SPONSORS FOR MAKING OUR 2ND ANNUAL MOTHERS EMPOWERMENT TEA A SUCCESS!

IN-KIND SUPPORTERS

American Plant Food
The City of Rockville & the
Glenview Mansion
The Gazette Newspaper
Honest Tea
Montgomery County Dept. of
Health & Human Services
Unión Y Sabor
Through the Kitchen Door
Whole Foods Markets

MUSICIANS

Gina Blitzstein, Katie Boss,
Aishat Olatunde and Ashley
Wire, students; Alexander Silver-
book and William C. Evans,
Sherwood H.S. Music Dept.

GOLD SPONSORS (\$250+)

Linna Barnes
Goldene & Herschel Blumberg
The Colburn Family Foundation
Margee Iddings & Faith
Resourcing Connections

SILVER SPONSORS (\$100)

Kenneth N. Brown, Chase
Manhattan Mortgage Corp.
Carol Garvey, M.D.
Rena and Del. Michael Gordon
Joan Karasik
The Mental Health Association
of Montgomery County
Jacqueline Starr

Montgomery County Collab.
Council for Children, Youth
and Families
Operation Runaway & Potomac
Ridge Behavioral Health Svcs.
Silver Spring YMCA Youth Svcs.
Edith Crowder Williams,
Millian Memorial United
Methodist Church
Lynne Yao, M.D.,
Pediatric Kidney Center

AUCTION DONORS

A Plus Tutoring Services
AFI Silver Theatre
As Kindred Spirits
B.D.'s Mongolian Grill
BAPA's Imagination Stage
Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream,
Bethesda & Rockville
Black Rock Center for the Arts
California Tortilla
The Capitol Steps
Carrabba's Italian Grill
Charmed I'm Sure by Linnette
Color Me Mine Pottery Studio
The Container Store
Dave & Buster's
David's Beautiful People
The David Letterman Show
Edible Arrangements
El Andariego Restaurant
Friends of the National Zoo
Alejandra Hucek
Indian Spring Country Club

Jasper's Restaurant
Johnson's Florist & Garden Ctr.
Kammerman Portraits
Kirsten's Cafe
Kitchen Etc.
L'Academie de Cuisine
Loew's Cineplex Rio Cinema
M&T Bank
Mama Fu's Restaurant
Mamma Lucia Restaurants
The Nail & Body Spa
The National Museum for
Women in the Arts
National Philharmonic
Glynis & Bob Noyes
Olney Ale House
Olney Theater
Politics & Prose Bookstore
Progressions Salon
Red Dog Cafe
Regal Cinema of Rockville
Ridgewells
Gary Rosenthal
Round House Theatre
Sherry Sigelman, R.N., C.M.T.
Silver Stars Gymnastics &
Kids' Athletic Club
Strathmore Hall
Strosnider's Hardware, Bethesda
Cong. Chris Van Hollen
Wash. Sports Club, N.Beth.
Working Dinners
Linda Yao

....AND OUR MANY FRIENDS!

Thanks to our Donors and Partners

- **The Colburn Family Foundation**, for donating hundreds of tickets to May and June D.C. United games to Linkages children and parents from Silver Spring, Takoma Park, Gaithersburg and Wheaton;
- **Louis Espejo, O.D. and staff of Pearle Vision in Rockville**, for donating free eye exams and eyeglasses for 25 children;
- **John Ahern and Mattress Warehouse**, for donating three bed sets to Linkages families at Maryvale ES;
- **Julie Harris and the NIH Children's Recreation and Welfare Association**, for donating 230 tickets to Ringling Bros & Barnum and Bailey Circus to Linkages families;
- **Montgomery Soccer Inc. (MSI)**, for sponsoring *Community Soccer* at Broad Acres and Highland ES for 400+ students;



Bridget Hartman and Town of Chevy Chase workers at Maryvale ES

- **Bridget Hartman and family, the Town of Chevy Chase and the Chevy Chase ES Student Government Association**, for organizing a collection of dozens of bicycles and 25 boxes of books, games, baby clothes and toys and for arranging their delivery at Maryvale ES;
- **Pam Hughes, Judy Laurenson and the Wyngate ES PTA and Student Government Association, Dave Cuichta of Office Depot in Rockville, and Karen Seibert and Girl Scout Troop #4232** for participating in Wyngate's "We Care" school supply drive, donating dozens of backpacks and boxes and boxes of school supplies;
- **Mary Tonelson and the Travilah ES PTA**, for donating proceeds from its "Recycle for Students" program to meet the needs of the Summit Hall ES community;
- **Helping Hands of the Rockville Senior Center**, for donating dozens of sweaters, scarves, hats, mittens and blankets to children and families at Maryvale E.S.;
- **Dorothy Cockrell the Lutheran Church of Saint Andrew**, for donating \$100 from its Thrift Shop to support our Mothers Retreats;
- **Temple Beth Ami Nursery School**, for donating diapers, baby equipment, toys and play room equipment to Linkages families and schools;
- **Joanna Hornbeck and family of Bethesda**, for donating boxes of Barbies and accessories to Linkages children;
- **Ian McIntyre of Gaithersburg**, for collecting dozens of books for Linkages children for his Confirmation project;
- **Mitchell Gerber and family Rockville**, for donating a toddler bed, baby equipment and toys to Linkages families;
- **Caryn Fischer and family of Rockville**, for donating maternity clothes and toys to Linkages families;
- **Jennifer Fairfax and family** for donating baby equipment to Linkages families;
- **Christine Powell**, for volunteering as an ESL teacher for Fox Chapel ES parents;
- **Frances Cox and employees of GenVec**, for donating \$800 for camp scholarships for children from Fox Chapel ES;
- **Kenneth Sprinkle**, for donating a computer to a Pine Crest ES family;
- **Emily Button**, for volunteering as an ESL teacher for Montgomery Knolls ES/Pine Crest ES parents;
- **Maria Avelar**, for volunteering as a literacy teacher for Montgomery Knolls ES/Pine Crest ES parents;
- **Donna Gregory**, for sponsoring Pine Crest ES mothers at the Women's Retreats;
- **Marvin Memorial Methodist Church**, for donating quantities of clothing to Montgomery Knolls ES/Pine Crest ES families;
- **Marilyn Hall and Christopher Lewis**, for donating a computer for parent use at the Montgomery Knolls ES Linkages Office;
- **Louise Allentuck and employees of Allentuck Landscaping**, for making sandwiches each month for Gaithersburg MS groups and the homework club at Sally Ride ES;
- **Sanjay Rajvanshi of Germantown**, for volunteering as a computer teacher for Sally Ride ES parents;
- **Pastor Lou Peil and Grace United Methodist Church**, for shar-

Thanks to our Donors and Partners

ing its kitchen for Gaithersburg MS's "Kids Get Cooking";

- **Sarah Friedman of Gaithersburg**, for donating baby equipment, children's clothing and toys to Sally Ride ES and Gaithersburg MS families;
- **Wheaton Presbyterian Church**, for donating 10 Easter food baskets to 16 adults and 26 children from Highland ES;
- **Saint Mark's Orthodox Church in Bethesda**, for donating 15 Easter food baskets, which served 26 adults and 39 children from Highland ES;
- **Mary Lee O'Connell and Joaquin Trejo** for presenting "Let's Talk: Transitioning to Middle School" to Highland ES parents;
- **The Landon School**, for donating 5 boxes of school supplies to Highland ES students;
- **Margee Iddings and the Rising Phoenix Retreat Center**, for supporting and hosting 65 mothers during this year's Mothers Empowerment Retreats;
- **Montgomery County Eastern Regional Services Center and its partners**, for hosting a Job Fair, including: *Montgomery County Police Department, StarPower Communications, Choice Hotels International, Eyre Transportation, United Parcel Services, National Education Association, Manpower Temp Agency, Bottom Line Squared, Family and Nursing Care, TeleSec CORESTAFF, Jewish Vocational Services, Safeway, Bethesda Marriott and Wheaton Job Service*;
- **Holy Cross Hospital, Cindy Hounsell of the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement, Susan Morris of the Maryland Cooperative Extension Services, parent Caprice Newsome and Andrea Williams** for presenting at the Greencastle ES/Banneker MS's weekly mothers' group and to **Melody Reynolds**, for providing child care services during the groups.
- **Pat Leland and Norma Quijada of the Maryland Cooperative Extension Services**, for leading 5 workshops in nutrition for Greencastle ES/Banneker MS mothers;
- **Sara Farooqui, Cheryl Brodsky, Lakeva Reid and Nana Benyarko**, for volunteering at Greencastle ES's Homework Club;
- **Melody Reynolds of Bottom Line Squared, Luby Ismail of Connecting Cultures, Evelyn Brooks of Eve's Childcare, Donna Cleverdon of CleverDog, Brian Meny of BLC Enter-**



Pearle Vision pros measure this young man for eyeglasses.

prises, **Winston Thomas of New Life Medical and Financial Services**, for presenting at Greencastle ES/Banneker MS's Entrepreneur's Brunch, and to **Cheryl J. Smith Mims, Southern Poundcakes by Cheryl and Juliet Lawrence, Juliet's Basket of Gifts** for donations to support the event;

- **The Rice family**, for donating an Easter basket to a Greencastle ES student;
- **Ms. Ruth**, for donating baby items for Greencastle ES/Banneker MS families.
- **Sonia Meneses, Virginia Wheaton, Jorge Montalvo, Maria Luisa Villegas and Andrea Uribe**, for providing translation services at Eastern MS's Health Clinic;
- **Presenters Belen Bryant, Marja Booker, Dr. Liliana Pinzon, Dr. Delores McGhee, Pedro Meneses, and Luis Hurtado**, for sharing information with Eastern MS parents;
- **Ann Roldan**, for donating clothing throughout the year for Eastern MS families.

We thank all of our donors and supporters. If we've inadvertently omitted you, please let us know by calling Sharon Strauss, 240-777-1449, and we will include your contribution in our next newsletter.

Gaithersburg Middle School Students Get Cooking!

With funding from the Montgomery County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, Linkages has expanded its partnership with *Through the Kitchen Door*, piloting the Teens Get Cooking program at Gaithersburg Middle School. Montgomery Youth Works has joined the collaboration to train high school youth as "teachers" of the middle school students. Linkages' mothers who have completed *Through the Kitchen Door*'s basic food preparation and nutrition course are receiving special training and compensation to support the teen program.

Whole Foods Markets continues to provide its in-kind support, contributing ingredients and making their stores available for field trips to help teach nutrition and consumer skills. A grant from the Montgomery County Community Foundation will support the program at additional middle schools in the coming school year.



Gaithersburg M.S. students learn about good nutrition and cooking with Through The Kitchen Door at Grace United Methodist Church.

Liesel Flashenberg, executive director of *Through the Kitchen Door*, is enthusiastic about expanding services to teens. "We're giving these adolescents practical skills that will ground them throughout their lives as well as introduce them to potential professions. And we're providing important information for them to consider about diet and nutritional choices," notes Flashenberg.

According to Alcira Colón, Linkages site coordinator at Gaithersburg M.S., Linkages students have thoroughly enjoyed the program. "So many students said they learned it was fun and easy to prepare new foods. They especially enjoyed the camaraderie among the adult leaders and the high school trainees. They loved it and they are interested in a follow-up class," said Colón.



21st Century Learning Center Grant Expands Family Literacy Programs

The Linkages to Learning Family Literacy Program continues to grow thanks, in part, to funding from a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant. Montgomery County Public Schools is the recipient of this large grant and has partnered with Linkages at several targeted Title I schools - Broad Acres ES, Summit Hall ES, Harmony Hills ES, Highland ES, Gaithersburg ES and Kemp Mill ES.

Linkages Family Literacy program promotes adult education that encourages the self-sufficiency of parents and offers age-appropriate children's activities to support school and lifelong learning. Interactive literacy activities for parents and their children strengthen English language learning and reading skills.

An innovative after-school dance club teaches children dances from the diverse cultures represented at the school. Family reading clubs provide incentives for parent and children to spend time together reading.

Parents attend workshops and educational groups to help them communicate with educators, support their children's academic work, and improve their parenting techniques. Workshops in nutrition, health and other areas develop life skills and promote independence. Enhanced English as a Second Language and computer skills classes increase parents' job readiness and income potential. Support services like childcare, flexible scheduling and transportation assistance make it possible for our low-income parents to access these opportunities.

According to Dr. Paul Scott, the Linkages Resource Team member representing MCPS, "Research shows that children do better in school when their parents are their primary teachers and full partners in their education. The 21st Century funding allows us to reach out to more families and provide more intensive services to help parents to become more engaged with their children's learning. Our services are designed to make sustainable changes in a family."

Health Fairs Promote Wellness

It's spring time, and Linkages sites buzz with activities designed to engage community members while connecting them with resources to improve families' health and well-being. As part of Linkages health education efforts, health fairs are offered at several sites, with school nurses and Linkages site coordinators reaching out to public and private groups interested in addressing the health care needs of our families.

Jackie Diehl, assistant coordinator of community health at Holy Cross Hospital explains why Holy Cross is involved. "We're a nonprofit, so we're looking for ways we can improve the health care status of the residents living in the neighborhoods we serve. Health fairs give us a chance to build trust with the community members," said Diehl.



Bringing parents together in a family-friendly setting with fun activities is key to the success of a health fair, according to Ladys Lux, RN, school nurse at Broad Acres' School-based Health Center. "The kids have a great time," says Lux. "Of course we talk to parents about all these issues as we interact with them at the Center. But the health fairs give them a personal introduction to the resources that are available. When people feel comfortable, they are much more likely to use the services," notes Lux.

Besides organizing groups and volunteers, staff engage the multicultural health promoters affiliated with Linkages' two school-based health centers. Funded by a State grant, the health promoters live in the school neighborhoods and share their knowledge with fellow residents. Each month, they learn about various prevention topics. They can help their friends and neighbors learn how to fill out an application for the Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program, or advise them about where they can receive help for chronic conditions like asthma and diabetes.

According to Glick, "The health promoters reach out to share knowledge and develop advocacy in their own neighborhoods. The grass root effort is based upon a simple idea," notes Glick. "It's about people helping people."



Above: Children role-playing at *Harmony Hills E.S. Health Fair*
Right: Tzu Chi Foundation Health Clinic Volunteer at *Eastern M.S.*

Broad Acres Sponsors:

African American Health Initiative; Amerigroup; Salud es Vida Health Promoter Program; Casa de Maryland; Child Passenger Safety Program; Consumer Affairs; Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services; Montgomery County Police Department; Latino Health Initiative Health Promoter Program, DHHS; School Based Health Center Multicultural Health Promoter Program, DHHS; Prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome, DHHS; Suburban Hospital; Washington Hebrew Congregation.

Harmony Hills Sponsors:

African American Health Initiative; Prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome, DHHS; Child Passenger Safety Program, Consumer Affairs; Holy Cross Hospital; Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services; Montgomery County Police Department; MCPS; Latino Health Initiative Health Promoter Program, DHHS; School Based Health Center Multicultural Health Promoter Program, DHHS.

Eastern Middle School Sponsors:

The Tzu Chi Foundation and Linkages to Learning.

We welcome our new staff...

Kimberly Collins, case mgr./mental health counselor, Broad Acres E.S.

Shannon Flannery, mental health counselor, Parkland M.S.

Eveling Gamarra, case manager, Parkland M.S.

Jerilyn Mesa, site coordinator, Rolling Terrace E.S.

Matilde Navarro, case manager, Harmony Hills E.S.

Laura Ortiz, mental health counselor, Argyle M.S.



...and say farewell to former colleagues:

Caron Cox-Branch, mental health counselor, Harmony Hills E.S.

Rachel Kavanaugh, mental health counselor, Maryvale, E.S.

Ife Milligan, mental health counselor, Montgomery Knolls E.S./Pine Crest E.S.

Susan Shewchuk, mental health counselor, Greencastle E.S./Banneker M.S.

America Taveras, case manager, Harmony Hills E.S.

Thang Tranh, comm. service aide, N.H. Estates E.S./Oakview E.S.

Eastern M.S. and Round House Theatre Present: Tobacco Free Teens



This June, the Eastern Middle School Tobacco Free Teens Theatre Club shared its anti-tobacco message with children attending Silver Spring YMCA's after-school child care program at the

Indian Springs Recreation Center. The students began the outreach project earlier in the spring through a collaboration among Linkages to Learning and Silver Spring YMCA Youth Services and the Round House Theatre's Education Department using a community youth prevention grant awarded by the Montgomery County Tobacco Coalition funded by Maryland Cigarette Restitution funds and the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.

"This is a fun way to get their message across and learn acting skills," states Marlene Woods, Linkages Site



In this skit, the young man is awakened by his mother from his dream about the harmful effects of tobacco.



After School students from the Silver Spring Y's Indian Springs Rec Center eagerly share what they know about tobacco.

Coordinator at Eastern M.S. Woods was interested in piloting the program at Eastern because she felt students would benefit from learning about the dangers of tobacco use while developing advocacy skills.

Wendy Norcross, consultant and teen tobacco prevention program director, explains, "Our goal is to empower them to become tobacco control leaders in their own communities and reduce youth tobacco use. Along with a number of other creative efforts, it's a way for young people to learn about tobacco's harmful effects while getting the message out that it's not "cool to smoke."

Beth Slepian, the students' drama coach from Round House Theatre, notes "I really enjoyed working with the Eastern students. The younger "Y" kids were obviously delighted with their skits. The grant was a great avenue for Round House to help Montgomery County to become a healthier community, while enriching youth through the arts."

Summit Hall E.S. and Maryvale E.S. Students Explore the Workplace

Each year, the Montgomery County Volunteer Center receives calls from businesses interested in expanding participation in Take Your Child to Work Day. "By opening their doors to students from beyond their employee community, these companies are creating opportunities for many youth who may not have the chance to participate at their own parents' workplace," notes Andrea Jolly, director of the Volunteer Center.

Linkages to Learning students at Maryvale E.S. were linked with the National Association of Securities Dealers, while Summit Hall E.S. students visited Manugistics. According to Carol Binta, site coordinator at Maryvale, "This is the second year we sent students, and they had a wonderful time. It's great for them to consider the many career possibilities that may be open to them when they grow up."



Maryvale ES students learn about teamwork at the National Association of Securities Dealers



Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive
Montgomery County, Maryland

Linkages to Learning
401 Fleet Street, 1st Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850



www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/Linkages

Phone: 240.777.1731

TTY 240.777.1236

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS
AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST



Scenes from Linkages Mothers Empowerment Program



*L to R (top): Unión Y Sabor from Summit Hall ES display Tea delicacies; Maryvale moms at the Rising Phoenix Renewal Retreat;
L to R (bottom): Silver Spring moms graduate from Through The Kitchen Door; Oakview/New Hampshire Estates moms enjoy the deck at their Retreat .*

